

Wamego Health Center

2018 – 2021 Implementation Strategy Plan

(WHC Board Approved May 29, 2018)

Overview

Wamego Health Center is a 25 bed Critical Access Hospital, located in the center of the Wamego community. The hospital's Emergency Department provides care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. WHC operates its own Laboratory, Imaging and Rehabilitation departments giving patients a full range of services with the convenience of one visit. With the Wamego Family Clinic located on the WHC's site, patients can conveniently access the services of Primary Care Physicians, an Internal Medicine Provider and a Nurse Practitioner.

The geographical area of Pottawatomie County was chosen for this CHNA because that is where Wamego Health Center (WHC) is located and where the bulk of their patients live or work.

Service to the poor is a primary value at Wamego Health Center in Wamego Kansas. In FY2018, Wamego Health Center in Wamego (WHC) contributed nearly \$759.4 thousand in community benefit; this included \$51,160 specifically to community benefit initiatives. Some examples of ways WHC has contributed include:

- Provided physicians and other clinicians to treat Community Health Ministries' Clinic patients who are low-income or uninsured and unable to access specialists or other health related services,
- Offered a free sports medicine clinic and concussion awareness program to all USD 320 athletes
- Provided the support of Licensed Clinical Therapists to Community Health Ministries' Clinic clients
- Helped to coordinate the initiative of Get Fit Wamego
- Participated in the Senior Resource Fair by providing glucose and blood pressure checks.
- Participated in the Health Professions Summit hosted by Kansas State University promoting health care careers for high school and non-declared major college students
- Hosted and facilitated Diabetes Support Group meetings to encourage compliance with health care protocols (e.g. diet and exercise)
- Provided a presentation on health eating and exercise for cardiac health to the TOPS membership group in Manhattan, KS
- Provided security transportation of patients to state mental hospitals when they have been brought into the ER and determined to be a danger to themselves or to others or if they needed more specialized medical treatment,
- Examined and treated victims of human trafficking in collaboration with Homestead, the rehabilitation program for these victims.
- Conducted and hosted focus groups for the 2018 CHNA effort,

To gain insights from the community for the purposes of planning and community improvement, Via Christi Health conducted a community-wide needs assessment for Riley and Pottawatomie Counties, which included the compilation of selected secondary data, administration of a community survey and focus groups. Secondary data, which is publicly available such as that from the Census survey, Kansas Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), and others, was compiled for the most recent years available. Additionally, a community survey was conducted via the internet, and through hard copy distribution at public locations or meetings to gather input from residents regarding their perceptions of community strengths and needs in 11 different topic areas (Quality of Life, Health, Mental Health, Social Issues, Children and Youth, Education, Aging, Housing, Transportation, Infrastructure, and Economics and Personal Finance).

A total of 781 surveys were completed with 328 identifying Riley County as their home base and 303 identifying Pottawatomie. Of the 781 respondents, 68 (8.7%) of the respondents returned a paper copy of the survey with the others electing to use the online SurveyMonkey version. The Riley County analysis is reported in a separate document but is available online from Via Christi Hospital in Manhattan webpage.

To reach residents without easy access to computers, paper copies of the survey were made available at the WHC, the Community Health Ministry Clinic and Three Rivers. The public was also informed about this effort through a radio talk show hosted by KMAN in which the listening audience was directed to the VCH-M website that housed the survey link.

Although significant efforts were made to solicit participation by a broad sample of community members, target populations representing young adults, Hispanics and other minority groups, as well as those from low-income households are not proportionately represented in the survey responses. Outside secondary data resources and focus group participants brought experience and perspectives on the needs of underrepresented segments of the community to supplement the CHNA analysis. The primary strengths and needs that were identified for Pottawatomie County were remarkably consistent regardless of method of data collection.

Prioritized Needs

Lack of Accessible and Affordable Child Care

According to the Department for Children and Families (2015), the funding for child care assistance in Kansas has decreased over the past few years as has the number of children receiving this benefit. In FY2008, there was an average of 21,211 households receiving monthly child care assistance compared to 12,779 in FY2015. When asked to identify the top three health needs related to children (ranging from newborns to 12 years old) in Pottawatomie County, respondents' top three answers were: after school programs (40.9%), bullying prevention (35.0%) and childcare for children – newborns to age five (32.9%).

Due to lack of space and expertise, WCH doesn't directly offer child care or long-term classes on infants, toddlers and preschoolers but encourages residents to take advantage of classes that are offered nearby in the neighboring town of Manhattan. WCH promotes the VCH-M classes for baby, toddler and child caregivers that strengthen their skills in caring for this most vulnerable population and to increase the number of caregivers available in the community. To assist with parenting education needs, VCH-M also offers classes from Daddy Basics and Breastfeeding Basics to Safe Sitters and First Aid for Children. However, WCH does offer presentations when requested by USD320 and others in the community on topics centered around children's health and wellness.

Needs Identified for Teens

The top three needs identified in the 2018 CHNA effort by Pottawatomie County respondents for teens was appropriate internet/technology use as 45.3% of the survey respondents are concerned about the growing practice of sexting and cyberbullying by youth between the ages of 13 to 18 years of age. Bullying prevention (40.4%) and substance abuse prevention and treatment (30.9%) rounded out the top three issues for this specific age group.

Since appropriate internet/technology use came out so high on this CHNA, WCH is going to work with the community and school districts on developing a plan of action to teach children and their parents how best to use the internet without becoming victims of it. The action plan focuses on implementing a community wide campaign by engaging community leaders, school district leaders, students and others to get involved.

Needs Identified for Seniors and Other Low-Income Populations

Respondents from Pottawatomie County identified affordable housing (36.1%), affordable prescriptions (30.5%) and assisted living options (22.1%) as the top three health needs associated with the older adult population. All three of these needs have increased dramatically since the last CHNA in 2015. Housing costs have increased in the area because of the growing population in the area due to new employers coming into town as well as an expansion of Fort Riley Army Base which is located nearby.

To address these needs, WCH is continuing to work with local partners to increase access to healthy food options. WCH is focusing its resources to increase access to healthy foods and to raise nutritional awareness starting in its own facility and in working with others throughout the community. Menu choices, including snacks offered, at the hospital are reflective of this new approach to healthy eating as the hospital serves the community daily through visitors, patients and employees.

In partnership with the Wamego Community Garden which provides direct access to healthy food, WCH employees take turns in working the garden which is right across the street from the hospital on property owned by the First Baptist Church in Wamego. The community has embraced their community garden and it now has its own webpage https://www.facebook.com/pg/wamegogarden/about/?ref=page_internal. Starting small in 2008 with donations of seeds, bedding plants, tools and hoses from farmers and organizations the WCG took root. WCH employees helped in submitting a grant that was funded and area farmers came in to cultivate the land for use, later another grant was received which allowed the founding group to build a sunroom. In 2013, the WCG became a separate 501c3 under the umbrella of the Wamego Community Foundation. While the whole community is welcome to pick the fresh produce, the intent was that people who were low income and vulnerable could use this garden to increase their vegetable intake to eat healthier. The extra food produced by the community garden is donated to the Community Health Ministry's pantry, the Senior Center and area nursing homes.

To allow those who are elderly to live in their own homes and maintain their independence for as long as possible, WCH staff regularly deliver Meals on Wheels that are prepared at the Wamego Community Center and delivered to an individual's home. Not only does this program allow the elderly to maintain their independence but it also ensures them of at least one healthy meal a day which many may not be able to afford or have the stamina to prepare.

Lack of Accessible & Affordable Mental Health Services

Respondents to the community survey rated access to and affordability of mental health services in the community as their top concern related to mental health. This need was echoed frequently in focus groups. Mental health services appear to be particularly difficult to access and afford for persons with low income and those who do not speak English.

Other mental health needs identified by survey respondents, as well as focus group participants, included the need to increase the number of mental healthcare providers as well as high quality mental health services and mental health education/prevention programs. The responders felt that there was a definite need for more substance abuse prevention/treatment programs in the area as well given the growing population and the increase in suicides during the last year.

WCH, in partnership with VCH-M, was successful in recruiting an adolescent psychiatrist to provide services in the Manhattan area since the last CHNA. When residents are brought into the ER for immediate treatment for crisis situations that are beyond the capability of WCH resources, appropriate referrals are made and secure transportation is arranged when necessary to make sure these patients get the help they need to ensure their safety as well as the safety of others. Many times, these individuals are without insurance or government assistance, so the hospital ends up footing the bill for the secure transports. Other resources that are near Wamego include:

Resources Available near Wamego include:

- 1) Pawnee Mental Health Services (785) 587-4300
- 2) Family Center (785) 532-6984
- 3) Family Care Center of Junction City (785) 762-4210
- 4) Cornerstone Family Counseling (785) 776-4105
- 5) Veridian Behavioral Health in Salina (785) 452-6113
- 6) Catholic Charities (785) 323-0644

Hospital staff are regularly represented at the Health and Human Services Committee meetings in the State Capitol where the need for expansion of Medicaid and additional resources needed for mental health care services are voiced and testimony is shared.

Increase the number of mental healthcare providers who can provide high quality mental health services for all ages – WHC, along with VCH-M regularly seeks to find new physicians, including psychiatrists, who may be interested in moving into the Manhattan/Wamego area. There has been some success in getting new practitioners to set-up practices in the area but psychiatrists, especially child psychiatrists are in great demand and difficult to recruit to a small city. But the staff of the hospital continues to try.

Resources Available:

- 1) Pawnee Mental Health Services of Riley County (785) 587-4300
- 2) Mental Health Services in Wamego (785) 456-7872
- 3) Peer to Peer Recovery Education Program (785) 233-0755
- 4) Central Kansas Foundation in Junction City (785) 762-3700

Physical Health

WHC offers its services to all people presenting themselves without regard for their ability to pay. WHC serves Medicaid and Medicare beneficiaries and offers financial assistance when appropriate. Central to the mission of WHC is its commitment to make financial assistance available to uninsured or underinsured patients to the extent possible. Hospital staff assists patients with application completion through submission of government public benefit forms when they need help in obtaining financial assistance for health care and may not be aware that they qualify for existing programs.

The hospital arranges for taxi transportation for low-income patients discharged from the hospital who have no form of safe transportation back to their homes.

Staff has partnered with Homestead, a rehabilitation program for human trafficking victims which is associated with the Westview Church in Manhattan in working to identify and treat victims of human trafficking. All staff receive education at town halls and various formats on how to identify red flags of victims of human trafficking with additional training on pediatric victims.

Top Needs That Will Not Be Addressed

While the needs may be great for many in Pottawatomie County, service providers and others in the community are oriented toward working together to leverage resources and bridge gaps for those most in need. WHC continues to support community wide efforts and is always looking for an opportunity to become more involved within limited resources, especially when dealing with health-related issues. The resources identified under each heading is not intended to be an exhaustive list but offers the reader a few suggestions on where they can turn for assistance when needed. Given the size of Wamego, many resources may not be available locally and residents may have to travel to access needed services available in Manhattan, Junction City, Topeka or even Kansas City.

Physical Health

Kansas is one of the few states across the country that has not expanded Medicaid and as a result, this has put additional financial strain on the hospital's operating budget.

Affordable Health Insurance – the hospital does not have the resources to go above and beyond what it is currently providing through its financial assistance program. It does offer health care to its own employees and their family but its resources are limited when it comes to providing health insurance for the community.

Resources Available:

- 1) Health Insurance Marketplace Call Center (800) 318-2596
- 2) Kansas Insurance Department (800) 432-2482
- 3) Senior Health Insurance Counseling for KS (SHICK) (800) 860-5260
- 4) Kansas Statewide Farmworker Health Program (KDHE) (785) 296-1200
- 5) North Central – Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging (800) 432-2703
- 6) KanCare – (800) 792-4884

Facilities for Physical Activity – there are parks and bike trails available in the community and many more available in neighboring Manhattan which has 28 parks, 13 which have playgrounds and 3 pools or the splash park. The hospital doesn't feel it should expend its limited resources on addressing this issue though as many of the 2018 CHNA respondents did not feel that this was a great need. The one thing that people, who did see this as a need, wanted an indoor swimming pool. There is a community committee that is considering the feasibility of having an indoor facility that would be able to offer year-round lap swimming and other physical activities for exercise of all age groups and WHC has participated in these discussions.

Affordable Prescriptions – while the hospital doesn't directly address this on a wide scale, WHC will assist with some limited prescriptions for patients by contacting the manufacturer to see if there are samples available if an individual has no other options or resources. Other prescription resources available for community residents are listed below.

Resources Available:

- 1) Kansas Statewide Farmworker Health Program (KDHE) (785) 296-1200
- 2) Konza Prairie Community Health and Dental Center (785) 238-4711
- 3) Medical Services in Wamego – (785) 456-7872
- 4) National Organization for Rare Disorders (800) 999-6673
- 5) Kansas Drug Card – (913) 638-8415
- 6) Familywise – (800) 222-2818

Mental Health

WHC continues to provide one-on-one counseling in partnership with the Community Health Ministry Clinic when called but the hospital has limited resources and no psychiatrist on duty. Given the reduction of financial support from the State of Kansas for mental health, it is difficult to recruit highly trained mental health specialists to the area. The current demand for services is greater than the resources available making the waiting time longer than is expected by patients and their families and problematic for providers especially in critical situations.

Resources Available:

- 1) Pawnee Mental Health Services (785) 587-4300
- 2) Family Center (785) 532-6984
- 3) Family Care Center of Junction City (785) 762-4210
- 4) Cornerstone Family Counseling (785) 776-4105
- 5) Veridian Behavioral Health in Salina (785) 452-6113
- 6) Catholic Charities (785) 323-0644

Substance Abuse Prevention/Treatment – while many times the hospital will treat these individuals because they have been brought to the ER by law enforcement, family or friends, the hospital is not currently able to treat large volumes of these types of patients due to limited resources and staff expertise. There are other organizations who are the experts in dealing with this type of challenge and offer counseling, education/prevention for drug use disorders as well as alcohol, psychological testing and assessment, mental health hotlines, counseling and psychiatric medication services.

Resources Available:

- 1) Pawnee Mental Health Services of Riley County (785) 587-4300
- 2) Mental Health Services in Wamego (785) 456-7872
- 3) Peer to Peer Recovery Education Program (785) 233-0755
- 4) Central Kansas Foundation in Junction City (785) 762-3700

Children 5 Years of Age and Younger

There are others in the community providing child care and after school programs – some may not be as affordable as others or as affordable as some would like but they are available. The State of Kansas Department of Children and Families will assist people in finding resources with child care and some families may qualify for assistance. WCH will help people with application assistance but cannot impact the outcome of their application or have influence on their eligibility which is limited by legislation.

Affordable Child Care – the hospital does not have adequate space nor is child care a part of our mission when it comes to healthy children. There are several resources where parents can go to get referrals but as more people move into the area, there is a need for more providers as openings are not vacant for long.

Resources Available:

- 1) Maternal & Infant/Family Connections (785) 776-4779
- 2) Family and Child Resource Center (785) 537-0688
- 3) Economic & Employment Services (785) 776-4011
- 4) K-State Center for Child Development (785) 532-3700
- 5) Maternal & Infant/Family Connections (785) 776-4779
- 6) Flint Hills Child Care Resource & Referral Agency
- 7) Pottawatomie County Head Start Child Care Center (785) 456-9165

After School Programs – like affordable child care, the hospital does not have adequate space nor does opening a facility that would offer after school programs fit our mission statement. Here are existing organizations that do offer some programming for those interested.

Resources Available:

- 1) Boys & Girls Club of Manhattan Central Elementary Wamego KS Drop-In Program (785) 539-1947
- 2) City of Manhattan Parks & Recreation (785) 587-2757

Financial Assistance to Families – the hospital provides financial assistance to families when they meet the financial assistance guidelines when hospitalized. However, since resources are limited, financial assistance is not available for other needs like rent or utility assistance. Here are a few programs that may be able to help with those kinds of expenses on a temporary basis.

Resources Available:

- 1) Consumer Credit Counseling (785) 539-6666
- 2) Salvation Army (785) 539-9399
- 3) Social Services (785) 456-7872
- 4) NEK-CAP (785) 948-2023

Teens Needs Not Being Addressed

Employment opportunities, bullying prevention and appropriate internet/technology use is outside the realm of WCH areas of expertise. While WCH does offer limited volunteer opportunities for youth, providing them with employment is not realistic given so much of their time is spent in school and the jobs available at the hospital are mostly full-time and require at least a high school education or more.

Bullying Prevention & Inappropriate Internet/Technology Use – WHC’s assistance with this needed area is limited due to available resources and lack of expertise in this area but most of the counseling agencies identified above and here in this section may be able to help youth who feel the need to bully others either in person or via the internet.

Resources Available:

- 1) Parents and Teachers as Allies (785) 233-0755
- 2) KU Child and Family Services Clinic in Lawrence (785) 864-4416
- 3) Cornerstone Family Counseling (785) 776-4105
- 4) Parents as Teachers (785) 587-2058
- 5) Family Center (785) 532-6984

Employment Opportunities – The hospital works with high schools, vocational training schools and colleges to give their students a bird’s eye view of health care careers or hands-on training to assist them in meeting requirements for grades or certifications for graduation. When vacancy arises within the hospital, those positions are advertised to find an appropriate match. However, for people who may need additional assistance in finding gainful employment, the resources listed below are recommended.

Resources Available:

- 1) Economic & Employment Services: Work Programs (785) 776-4011
- 2) Manhattan Workforce Center (785) 539-5691

Older Adults & Low Income

Affordable Housing – The hospital is not able to assist with this community need due to lack of resources and expertise. Housing in the Wamego/Manhattan area have risen and is expected to continue to rise as more people move in but this need does not complement our mission of providing health care.

Resources Available:

- 1) North Central – Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging (800) 432-2703
- 2) KS Department for Aging & Disability Services (800) 432-3535
- 3) Manhattan Housing Authority (785) 776-8588

Access to Daily Meals – The hospital may provide meals to caregivers who are spending most of their time with a loved one who is hospitalized and is covered by Medicaid or has identified they are low income. However, providing daily meals to the community at large is cost prohibitive and there are already several programs available in Wamego and tied closely with faith communities.

Resources Available:

- 1) North Central – Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging (800) 432-2703
- 2) Social Services (785) 456-7872
- 3) Wamego Food Pantry (785) 456-9646
- 4) Flint Hills Breadbasket (785) 537-1353

Assisted Living Options – Via Christi does operate an assisted living facility in the Manhattan area but with a growing aging population in Kansas other assisted living options may be needed. Some aging individuals still want to remain in their home but may need help with medication management, bathing/showering, preparing meals and with shopping. So, there are a few other resources listed below which may help to accommodate those needs without having to move out of the house and into a specific facility.

Resources Available:

- 1) Ascension Living – Via Christi Village (785) 539-7671
- 2) North Central – Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging (800) 432-2703
- 3) Medical Services in Wamego – (785) 456-7872

Needs to be Addressed and Measured

- **Affordable Health Services – Goal: To increase the knowledge and access to affordable healthcare services available in our community by giving options to the poor and underserved by September 2019.**

Strategy:

- Work within the existing Wamego Health Center and Community Health Ministry model to establish a network of services that could be provided.

Anticipated impact:

- Residents will have improved knowledge of charity policy
- Increase the number of patients reporting better comfort with charity policy
- Increase the number of residents who are aware and receive their annual flu shot

- **Increase Mental Health Education/Awareness - Goal: to improve the education and knowledge surrounding our community’s awareness of mental health issues**

Strategy:

- Work with community agencies as well as resources at WHC to increase access to mental health education

Anticipated impact:

- Improved access to mental health education and more awareness on where to go to receive mental health services on the next CHNA

- **Education for teens 13 – 18 years old involving appropriate internet/technology use – Goal: to improve the access to education for safe and appropriate internet/technology use for our teens**

Strategy:

- Implement a community-wide campaign that integrates education for teens as well as engagement of parents involving their teen’s use of technology including sexting and cyberbullying.

Anticipated impact:

- Improved community resources for access to internet and technology use
- Improved scores on next CHNA regarding this as a community concern

To see complete Community Health Needs Assessment, go to:

<https://wamegohealthcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/WHC-Final-FY2018-CHNA-with-Attachments-07252018-1.pdf>